

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
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AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

UNCLAS PRETORIA 4899

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OVIP, SF (CONNALLY, JOHN B.)
SUBJECT: VISIT OF JOHN CONNALLY TO SOUTH AFRICA

REF: STATE 200608, PRETORIA 4508

JOHN CONNALLY ARRIVED IN SOUTH AFRICA AUGUST 21. THE FOLLOWING IS THE

TEXT OF AN INTERVIEW OF THE GOVERNOR ON HIS FIRST DAY IN COUNTRY
CONDUCTED BY AIDA PARKER AND APPEARING IN THE CITIZEN.
BEGIN TEXT: QUOTE: Q. HOW DO YOU VIEW THE CURRENT PUSH FOR TRADE
SANCTIONS AND DISINVESTMENT AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA?- "IN MOST CASES,
THESE EFFORTS ARE MISGUIDED AND MISDIRECTED, LARGELY BECAUSE OF A
LACK OF INFORMATION. MANY PEOPLE BECOME EMOTIONALLY INVOLVED
BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE THE RACES HERE DO NOT RECEIVE EQUAL
TREATMENT IN ALL RESPECTS.

"I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT ATTITUDE, BUT THE FACTS REMAIN THAT WE
HAVE MUCH THE SAME PROBLEMS IN THE US. WE HAVE MOVED IN THE LAST 15
YEARS TO TRY TO BRING ABOUT LEGAL EQUALITY AND WE ARE MAKING
PROGRESS IN PROVIDING ECONOMIC EQUALITY, BUT WE HAVE NOT YET
REACHED THIS.

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" THE PEOPLE WHO BECOME SO EMOTIONALLY INVOLVED OVER THE SOUTH
AFRICAN ISSUE OVERLOOK THE FACT THAT THE BLACKS HERE EARN HIGHER
WAGES, LIVE IN BETTER HOMES, GET BETTER MEDICAL TREATMENT, HAVE
GREATER ECONOMIC HOPES FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR CHILDREN THAN
ANY OTHER BLACKS IN AFRICA.

" IF YOU DESTROY THE STRENGTHS OF THE WHITES HERE, THEN SURELY THE
BLACKS THEMSELVES WILL RECOGNIZE THAT THEIR OWN PROSPECTS FOR

PROSPERITY AND ADVANCEMENT MUST BE IMMEASURABLY DIMMED".

Q. THEN YOU WOULD NOT SUPPORT SANCTIONS AGAINST THE COUNTRY?-"MY OWN VIEW IS THAT SOUTH AFRICA IS A CRITICALLY IMPORTANT COUNTRY, BOTH GEO-POLITICALLY AND FROM THE ECONOMIC STANDPOINT. WE SHOULD NOT BE FRIGHTENED OFF BY THE PROBLEMS THAT EXIST IN SOUTH AFRICA. EVERY COUNTRY HAS PROBLEMS, EVERY CONTINENT HAS PROBLEMS".

Q. WOULD YOU AGREE THAT AMERICAN BIG BUSINESS IS BECOMING RESTIVE OVER THE CONSTANT HARASSMENT OVER ITS SOUTH AFRICAN CONNECTIONS?-"WELL, AMERICAN BUSINESS IS HERE BECAUSE THERE ARE SOUND ECONOMIC REASONS FOR IT TO BE HERE. I THINK, TOO, THAT AMERICAN BUINESSMEN HAVE A SOCIAL CONSCIENCE- THEY FEEL THAT BY PROVIDING AN ECONOMIC BASE

AND VITALITY, THEY ARE CREATING JOBS, CREATING INDUSTRIAL OPPORTUNITY, WITH THE BLACKS AS THE PRINCIPAL BENEFACTORS.

"IN THEIR VIEW, AT LEAST, THEY ARE ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE BLACK PEOPLE.

" THEY ARE AT TIMES UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE EMOTIONAL APPROACH THAT SOME PEOPLE DISPLAY IN RESPECT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PROBLEM."

Q. DO YOU PERCEIVE ANY SOFTENING IN US ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOUTH AFRICA?-"I THINK THERE IS THE BEGINNING OF A GREATER PERCEPTION AMONG AVERAGE US CITIZENS OF THE PROBLEMS THAT SOUTH AFRICA FACES IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO RESTRUCTURE ITS GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE GREATER FREEDOM AND GREATER OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL ITS UNCLASSIFIED

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CITIZENS.

" I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THIS IS AS YET INFLUENCING THE US GOVERNMENT, BUT I DO THINK THERE IS A MORE WIDESPREAD UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT SOUTH AFRICA IS ALL ABOUT, WHAT IT HAS DONE, HOW MUCH BETTER OFF ALL THE RACES ARE HERE COMPARED WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

" MORE AMERICANS ARE BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND THAT WAGES HERE ARE HIGHER, STANDARDS OF LIVING BETTER, AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY INCOMPARABLY BETTER THAN ALMOST ANYWHERE ELSE IN AFRICA; THAT CONSEQUENTLY THE OPPORTUNITY OF INDIVIDUAL ADVANCE, REGARDLESS OF RACE, IS SUPERIOR HERE TO ANY NEIGHBORING STATE OR INDEED IN THE BLACK NATIONS OF AFRICA."

Q. WOULD YOU AGREE THAT THE RECENT US VOTE ON RHODESIAN SANCTIONS REFLECTS A WIDENING DISSATISFACTION WITH MR. CARTER'S POLICIES, ESPECIALLY IN RELATION TO SOUTHERN AFRICA?-" I THINK CONGRESS HAS SHOWN IN MANY WAYS THAT IT IS UNHAPPY WITH MR. CARTER'S FOREIGN POLICIES- AND I SHOULD ADD, HIS DOMESTIC POLICIES AS WELL. AS A RESULT CONGRESS IS ASSERTING MORE AND MORE AUTHORITY OVER FOREIGN POLICY, WHICH I DO NOT THINK IS A GOOD THING. IN THE LONG RUN, IT IS GOING TO MEAN TROUBLE FOR THE US.

"BUT, GIVEN MR. CARTER'S INABILITY TO PROVIDE THE NEEDED LEADERSHIP, CONGRESS ITSELF IS ATTEMPTING TO FILL THE VACUUM."

Q. MANY HERE ARE MYSTIFIED AT AMERICAN SUPPORT OF THE MARXIST-CONTROLLED TERRORIST FORCES?-"I AM AT A LOSS TO EXPLAIN IT. OBVIOUSLY, I AM NOT PRIVY TO THE DAY-BY-DAY CONSIDERATIONS OF OUR GOVERNMENT, BUT IT IS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO UNDERSTAND WHY WE CONSISTENTLY INSIST THAT THE MARXIST-BACKED TERRORIST FORCES BE INCLUDED IN THE RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT WHEN WE SHOULD KNOW THAT THESE VERY SAME TERRORISTS WILL NOT BE HAPPY TILL THEY HAVE SEIZED DICTATORIAL CONTROL OF THE COUNTRY. INEVITABLY, THEY WOULD DESTROY THE VERY THING OUR GOVERNMENT HOPES TO ACHIEVE: PARTICIPATION BY ALL CITIZENS IN A REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.
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" ALL TOO OFTEN WE HAVE INSISTED ON A SO-CALLED POLICY OF 'ONE MAN, ONE VOTE' WHEN WE SHOULD ADD 'BUT NOT ONE TIME'."
EDMONDSON

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